critical digest

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New York Theatre Week

The Dark Is Light Enough-ANTA 2/23. Katharine Cornell and Roger Stevens present Christopher Fry's new play with Miss Cornell, Tyrone Power, Arnold Moss, John Williams, staged by Guthrie McClintic...Silk Stockings-Imperial 2/24. Feuer & Martin present Cole Porter musical based on "Ninotchka" with book by George S Kaufman, Leueen MacGrath and Abe Burrows. Staged by Cy Feuer with Hildegarde Neff, Don Ameche ...Juno and the Paycock-Greenwich Mews 2/24. Greenwich Mews Theatre presents revival of Sean O Casey play directed by Frank Silvera...The Three Sisters-4th St 2/25. David Ross presents revival of Chekhov play with new translation by Stark Young. Cast includes Morris Carnovsky, Roger de Koven, Philip Loeb. Directed by Mr. Ross.

Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

The Wayward Saint- Cort 2/17. Wide differences of opinion on the production given Paul Vincent Carroll's new play found only Times, Mirror and Post aisle men on the pro side. All agreed that Liam Redmond in the title role was a delight, while several panned performance of Paul Lukas as devil's aide. In the pro side Atkinson, Times, thought the gaiety, sweetness, innocence and grace of spirit outweigh the softness of the writing. Coleman, Mirror, enjoyed it immensely and recommended it to those who can still dream in amundane world and have affection for its gentle and noble souls. Though Watts, Post, feared production lacked consistent effectiveness, he did admit its fresh sweetness is remarkably disarming. Heading the con side, Kerr, Herald Tribune, panned director John Gerstad for staging fantasy as if it were "Ma and Pa Kettle in Ireland." Somewhere between Carroll's imagination and the stage of the cort something must have disappeared, notes Chapman, News, who does not believe there is enough left to make it satisfying. Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun, is sure the play would double its charm and multiply its zany logic if it were acted by a truly Hibernian cast. McClain, Journal American, would have voted pro if first half had been as charming as second half. Direction again was blamed.

Tonight in Samarkand- Morosco 2/16. Unanimous, but light, drubbing of new play by Jacques Deval and Lorenzo Semple, Jr, awarded by NY daily critics for diverse reasons. Generally Louis Jourdan and Jan Farrand were okayed in the cast, and Alan Schneider's direction was approved. Other cast members applauded included Alexander Scourby, Michael Gorrin, Halliwell Hobbes and Rosemary Prinz. Though there are a lot of engrossing ideas, Times reviewer feared magic never really takes hold of the whole drama. Kerr, Herald Tribune, thought the major weakness lies in the curious tone of the central romantic relationship, a pair who have no real scenes between them. Rather Tenuous, adds Chapman, News. A big circus tent with nothing very much under it, sums up Cole man, Mirror. Watts, Post, found the proceedings an odd mixture of effectiveness and disappointment, with the latter mood slightly prevailing. Shallow characters in a play not very ingeniously contrived, concludes Hawkins, WT & S. Though play was panned, all agreed that scenery designed by Ben Edwards was among the most fascinating of any season. Baby tiger, carried onstage, also won plaudits from most.

Drama Desk Meeting

Ernest Martin and Cy Feuer will be guests of NY theatre editors and reporters at Feb 28 meeting, Lilo, Can-Can , Julie Andrews, The Boy Friend, and Don Ameche and Hildegarde Neff, Silk Stockings, will also be present.

Off Broadway

"Side Show" program at Phoenix will present on Mondayay,March 14 The White Devil, March 28 L'Histoire du Soldat and April 4 Moby Dick. Elliott Silverstein is director of series.

Ascent of F6 will be presented by Markaren Productions Wed through Sat at Davenport Theatre, 138 E 27 starting Feb 23...Edward Andrews and Roberta Jonay have leads in Three by Thurber which St.John Terrell will produce at Theatre de Lys Mondays only...NYU Hall of Fame Players will present J B Priestlye's Treasure of Pelican March 9-12.Philip Loeb replaces Lou Gilbert in Three Sisters at the 4th St Theatre starting Feb 25...Solo interpretation of Hamlet by Lisa Carlisle will perform Tuesdays at Davenport Theatre.

Rehearsal Club Revue will be presented by 25 residents of Rehearsal Club March 2 and 3 at Carl Fisher Hall with Bibi Osterwald as guest star...Once Over Lightly is new name of revue due Mar 15 at Barbizon Plaza with Sono Osato and Jack Gilford.

The Immortal Husband, presented by Artists Theatre, at Theatre De Lys, was panned by the NYC daily critics. James Merrill's play was billed as a closet drama that reeps deeper and deeper into the closet by Atkinson,Times. Kerr,Herald Tribune,admired in a left handed way, the talent which went into production to make the theatre untheatrical. Most agreed with Hawkins,WT&S,that there was some very creditable acting and some nicely phrased writing,but the overall result was dull. Anne Meachem was applauded by all.

Theatre Film Notes

Audrey Hepburn and Mel Ferrer will star in Paramount's "Ondine"..."The Little Hut" film will be made abroad by Mark Robson and F. Hugh Herbert...20th Century Fox will present "The King and I" film as a 65mm roadshow presentation.

Futures

SILK STOCKING	Imperial	Feb 24
THREE SISTERS	4th St	Feb 25
SHOESTRING REVUE	President	Feb 28
MAST[illegible]ILDER	Phoenix	Mar 1
B[illegible]	Music Box	Mar 2
TH[illegible] BY THURBER	De Lys	Mar 7
IN APRIL ONCE	Bway Cong	Mar 13
[illegible]NCE OVER LIGHTLY	B.Plaza	Mar 15
THREE FOR TONIGHT	Plymouth	Mar 21
CAT ON HOT TINROOF	Morosco	Mar 24
TRIPLE BILL	Bijou	Mar 26
CHAMPAGNE COMPLEX		Apr 6
INHERIT THE WIND	National	Apr 10
ANKLES AWEIGH	Mellinger	Apr 14
THE HONEYS		Apr 14
GUYS & DOLLS	City Center	Apr 20

Theatre TV Comments

"The Women" presented on NBC TV Producers Showcase drew mixed notices from NY TV reviewers. Gould,Times, and Tuck, Post,thought star filled production was very well done. While Torre, WT&S, and Rose,Variety weren't moved. Fomer has seen meaner [illegible]s on the daytime TV serials.Variety editor thought script dated.

"CD" New Service $25 year Charter Subscription Offer

"CD" new expanded service which will include critic and ticket data onNY and out of town shows,plus the new printed weekly newsletter with photos and sketches will start shortly.
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Green Room Department

WHERE'S OFF BROADWAY...Though Off Broadway Theatre may attempt to define itself as only those groups which are "professional", "commercial" "organized" and "generally reviewed", Watt,News, bets that various professional,commercial and organized stage unions will figure out what is a "off Broadway group" for them.

COLUMN TIPS...Broadway theatre party agents given close scrutiny treatment by License Commissioner, hears Kilgallen...Cat on a Hot Tin Roof rehearsing 12 hours per day under special Equity okay,reports Walter...Paul Douglas faces suit from North Carolina promoter after halting Carolina tiny tour,notes Wilson.

DRAMA MAIL BOX...2000 schools in NY have been receiving discount tickets to shows at the Phoenix, co-producer T. Edward Hambleton reports via Times Mailbag. The return has been most encouraging...Seats in NY legit houses may have fitted one generation of theatre goers,but seem to come in the wrong shape for today's breed, complains a NJ theatre sitter to "C.D."

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Eva LeGallienne ought to move her thespian efforts uptown to the City Center, suggests NBC Leon Pearson,Critic at Large...Proscenium Productions deserve some sort of commendation for their bravado in risking Anouilh more consistent inscrutability in Thieves Carnival,notes Nathan, Journal American...It would be a great pity if theatre grew so foolish as to leave thrillers and their audiences exclusively to films and concentrate entirely on cerebral matters,signs Watts,Post.

EMPIRE BUILDING...Problem of naming the building at 1430 Broadway, site of the Empire Theatre,detailed by Farrell,World Telegram & Sun. Some want to call it merely 1430 Broadway. But members of the Players,Friars,Lambs feel that some plaque is due the memory of those theatrical greats who once played the house. Columnist suggests building be called Lowenstein Building(its builder) and that a fitting plaque be put on its corner.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES...Busy Leonard Sillman has just bought a house on East 79th St, reading a revue for the Versailles, casting Serena Blandish, prepping Mrs Patterson for the road, and planning a new New Faces, lists Coleman, Mirror... Opening night notes from people she don't know,like Max Gordon,for instance, asking where she has been, burn up Shirl Conway,Plain and Fancy, McClain, Journal American. For the past 7 years she has been touring around the world,small parts in shows that closed,and big spots in night clubs that didn't pay off.

Pros & Cons by TMK

The Wayward Saint is a delightful bit of whimsy that presents the most charming Irishman seen on-stage in years,and the gentliest lion onstage this season. Except for Paul Lukas' annoying and hard to understand accent,the new Paul Vincent Carroll play is enjoyable,heart warming theatre.

The Immortal Husband is a well acted bore.

Tonight in Samarkand presents the most ingenious scenery of any straight play of the season, a fine idea for a play,and a complete lack of self control by the authors.

Grass is Always Greener seemed to one playgoer at least a dated play which was given the worst stock production seen in NY in years. Downtown National theatre is on the crummy side and needs a paint job,but quick.

Actors Studio will move in early May 1955 to its new building at 432 W 44 which has been purchased from the National Amputation Foundation. Money for the downpayment was raised by actors and actresses enrolled at the non-profit studio. A highlight of the fund raising campaign will be the world premiere of Elia Kazan's film "East of Eden" at the Astor Theatre March 9. Orchestra and mezzanine tickets for the benefit performance will sell for $50, which will include a supper party at the Sheraton-Astor Roof. Studio was founded in 1947 by Cheryl Crawford and Lee Strasberg.

Plays

The Saint of Bleecker Street which had posted a closing notice will remain at Broadway at least through April 2...Charles Bowden and Richard Barr are planning a triple bill program at Bijou March 26 to include Trouble in Tahiti opera, Paul Draper, and one act play...New York City Light Opera Company will present Guys and Dolls, Finian's Rainbow and South Pacific at the City Center starting April 20... Bachelor Party will be produced by Burt Lancaster and Harold Hecht next November... John LaTouche is adapting Ah Wilderness for a musical presentation by David Merrick ...Theatre Guild is planning musical version of The Captain's Paradise film.

Players

Albert Salmi replaced Jerome Courtland in Bus Stop...Hiram Sherman has replaced Don Beddoe in Three for Tonight...Eli Wallach succeeds David Wayne in role of Sakini in Teahouse of the August Moon...Joan Fontaine released from contract in Tea and Sympathy because of a shoulder injury, Mary Fickett has taken over role...Gretchen Wyler replaced Yvonne Adair, David Opatoshu replaced Clarence Hoffman in Silk Stocking...Howard Lindsay elected president of "Players Club".

Summer Playhouses

Laurel Race Course Musical Theatre to be operated at Laurel, Md. Race Course by Charles Bowden, Richard Barr and Lee Krieger opening June 20 with a 12 week program ...Lauritz Melchoir will return as lead of Jones Beach, LI, Arabian Nights.

Other Broadways

Porgy and Bess was hailed, per usual, in Rome, and will then move to Naples and finally to Milan's La Scala Opera Theatre...French production of Teahouse of August Moon panned by Paris critics...Helen Hayes and Mary Martin have agreed to star in The Skin of Our Teeth in Paris' "Salute to France" this summer...Eartha Kitt's illness will prevent road tour of Mrs. Patterson.

Theatre Ad Notes

Mary Fickett, who has taken over lead role in Tea and Sympathy, featured in display ad letter signed by Elia Kazan and Robert Anderson. "We know you will share our enthusiasm for this talented and charming actress" ad concluded...The Saint of Bleecker Street cannot survive with the present lethargy of the general theatre and music minded public, warned producer Chandler Cowles in a large display ad. He noted that expenses could be saved by cutting the cast and orchestra, but that he would not compromise on this.

Theatre TV & Radio Notes

NBC has released Robert Sherwood from his TV play writing contract of nine one hour plays due in five years, two were produced...CBS TV See it Now canceled plans to televise Porgy and Bess stay in Milan...Ossie Davis plays title role in NBC TV Kraft Feb 23.